

In re the [] Marriage [] Paternity of _____

**REQUEST TO FAMILY COURT
MEDIATION SERVICE
FOR MEDIATION**_____
Petitioner/Jt. Petitioner

--- and ---

CASE # ____ FA / PA _____

Respondent/Jt. Petitioner**TO: MICHAEL J. BRUCH, MILWAUKEE COUNTY FAMILY COURT COMMISSIONER**
901 N. 9th St. Room 707, MILWAUKEE, WI 53233**FROM:** Please **PRINT** all information except signature

Name: _____

E-mail address: _____

Mailing address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Phone: (____) _____

I request Court-ordered mediation with:

Name: _____

E-mail address: _____

Mailing address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Phone: (____) _____

The other party and I have been unable to work out problems with legal custody and/or physical placement. The problems are:

_____ (add pages if needed).

I understand that this IS NOT a request for a court hearing, and that, if we can settle or disagreements through mediation, we may not need to go to court. **I understand that I must send a copy of this request to the other parent (unless the other parent has joined in this request).**

I join in this request:

X _____
SignatureX _____
Signature_____
Print/type name_____
Print/type name_____
Date_____
Date

Milwaukee County Circuit Court
Family Division-Family Court Mediation Service
Room 707-Milwaukee County Courthouse
901 N. 9th St., Milwaukee, WI 53233

Voice: (414)278-4412
Fax: (414)223-1947

HOW DOES THE COURT HANDLE DISAGREEMENTS ABOUT CHILDREN?

Frequently the courts are called on to decide disputes between parents about their children. Unfortunately, there is strong evidence that when parents battle in court over children, the children suffer. The emotional harm from that battle can last a lifetime. To avoid this, the law requires parents who have disagreements about their children to try an alternative way to settle their dispute BEFORE court intervention. This alternative way to settle the case is called *mediation*.

When the court learns there is a disagreement about children, the parents will be ordered to attend mediation. (Keep in mind that mediation may not be appropriate in all cases because of domestic violence, drug abuse, mental illness or other reasons.) In mediation parents meet with a neutral 3rd party, a *mediator*, and work to find answers to the disputes they are having. If the parents find a solution acceptable to both of them, the problem is solved.

If no agreement is reached in mediation, the process of having the court decide the issues begins. A lawyer, (the Guardian ad Litem or GAL), is appointed to represent the best interests of the children. GAL fees can be very expensive--often thousands of dollars. Usually the parties are required to pay the costs equally. The court process will often take a long time to finish--from 6 to 18 months. It is a difficult process and can leave both parents and children feeling hurt and angry.

Considering the financial and emotional costs of having a court decide a custody or placement dispute, mediation is clearly a better alternative. Mediation is not about winning and losing. It is about doing what is best for your children.

- Mediation helps parents find constructive solutions to their disagreements and it increases the chances they will be able to solve any future problems on their own.
- Mediation is scheduled more quickly than a court date.
- Mediation is private--what is said in mediation cannot be used in court.
- Mediation is reasonably priced - the cost is \$100 per person.
- Mediation allows the parents to decide what's best, rather than a judge deciding for them. After all--who knows and cares most about your children?

If you are interested in mediation and would like a referral please complete the form on the back and return it to the Office of the Family Court Commissioner. PLEASE MAKE SURE TO INCLUDE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS. You will then be referred to mediation through Family Court Mediation Services. If you have any questions, please call Family Court Mediation Services at (414) 278-4412.